

STUDENT REPORT
UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Fall 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Utah is a state of the USA that is situated in the west. The capital of the Utah state is Salt Lake City. There are a few campuses of the Utah State University located throughout Utah. However, the main campus of Utah State University is positioned in a small town called Logan. Usually the transfer students are told to stay in the main campus of the university. Logan is situated around 90 miles away from the closest international airport, Salt Lake City Airport. The population of Logan is around 50,000. The Utah State University is No. 5 in the State University Ranking in the USA. (Spencer, 2018) In this report, I will try to put in scripture the steps that I had to go through to spend a semester abroad at Utah State University and other necessary information that students aspired to go there for a semester abroad from European University Viadrina may find useful.

APPLICATION

After the initial selection for the position from European University Viadrina for a semester abroad at Utah State University, the selected student has to formally make an application to the Utah State University through a portal. The Department of International Affairs, European University Viadrina will assign a contact person who will help the selected student go through the process. Hence, it is recommended that you attend all the meetings and be very clear about the steps required to successfully go through the process. Timeliness is crucial, and therefore, things such as the last date of application should be kept in mind as the universities in the USA are very strict about such deadlines. Once the application is made, it takes around a month for the university to let you know about the offer through email. The probable date of arrival of documents (usually called Welcome Packet) required to stand at the USA Embassy for visa application is also stated in the offer email. The file usually arrives in the second half of May by post. However, it differs from year to year.

ACQUIRING VISA

The Welcome Packet that is sent to the address of the Department of International Affairs, European University Viadrina and they let the selected students know when it arrived through email. Generally, there is a gap of around 60 days within which the selected student has to stand at the USA Embassy for visa interview in order to obtain visa and plan his travel to the USA accordingly. So, keeping alert about the email from the Department of International Affairs regarding the Welcome Packet is very important. After the arrival of the Welcome Packet, the selected student must take an appointment at the USA embassy as soon as possible. The availability of dates for appointment is limited and if taken by someone beforehand it will not be available for the others. Therefore, finding a suitable date is only possible when it is done in a timely fashion. The USA Embassy usually takes around 7 days for successful applicants to grant visa and send it to the designated address of the selected student. However, it is wise to remember that the process can take up to 90 days if required due to inquiry or other issues. The appointment takes a fee and alongside that a SEVIS Fee has to be paid at least 3 days before the appointed date. There can be delay in visa application processing without the payment of SEVIS Fee. It should, therefore, be paid in due time.

TRAVELLING TO THE USA

After the visa has been received, it is suggested to purchase a ticket to the USA as early as possible. The price of the ticket fluctuates frequently and in only a matter of a day, the ticket price can increase 50 euros or more. It is suggested to purchase a ticket to John F. Kennedy Airport and then purchase a domestic flight to Salt Lake City Airport from there to save on the ticket price. The ticket for the domestic flight can also be purchased beforehand. It is also suggested to keep the luggage limits on mind as the USA domestic flights only allow up to 23 Kg (50 lb.) a luggage. Therefore, packing luggage according to such limits will be optimal. To travel from Salt Lake City Airport to the Utah State University, the best transport is Salt Lake Express. The best perk of using Salt Lake Express is that even if a trip is missed, you can take the next trip with them with the same ticket without any issues. As a result, missing a trip due to flight delay will not cost you more. Tickets for a date and time can be purchased on Salt Lake Express website.

HEALTH INSURANCE

For any person travelling to the USA, it is very important to have a health insurance for the period he will be there as healthcare is expensive in the USA. For the students of European University Viadrina, keeping the German insurance running is mandatory as the enrollment depends on it. Alongside that another insurance has to be purchased in the USA. The insurance should cover the whole period of stay in the USA. It is also one of the requirements at the Port of Entry to enter the USA. The Global Engagement Office of the Utah State University helps with the insurance contract. The insurance premium will be included in the list of the fees that are needed to be paid to USU in the beginning of the semester.

ACCOMODATION AND MEAL

The most common dormitory assigned to transfer students is the Ethelyn O. Greaves Hall, also known as the Global Village. It is a three-story building. There are 12 apartments in the dormitory. Each apartment holds 3 bedrooms, a bathroom, a toilet, a kitchen, and a living space. Every bedroom has two bunk beds for two residents with separated tables, drawers, and cabinets. Therefore, each apartment hosts 6 residents in total. There are 3 common spaces placed on the basement, ground-floor, and first floor. The common space in the basement includes a kitchen, a large television, and ample number of couches. Social gatherings can be arranged in the basement for this reason. The other common spaces only have couches, tables and chairs, except that the ground floor common space has a vending machine additionally. The second floor has a roof with a couple of tables and chairs to relax or to study. It is a mixed sex dormitory. Male and female residents are assigned to separate apartments. It is recommended to cook on your own to save money. However, if someone is interested to taste the food served in the university cafeterias then



Pic. 1: Writer with his flat mates in front of Greaves Hall (also called the Global Village).

they could purchase a meal plan. The higher the number of meals purchased, the lower the cost of a meal at one of the cafeterias at the university. The highest and the lowest a meal gets in accordance to the meal plan is 10 dollars and 7 dollars respectively. The university cafeterias have buffet system. The dishes served in the cafeterias are mediocre but can work as an easy to get meal for anyone. The purchased meal plans are included in the university ID card and every student must punch their ID card to enter a cafeteria to get food. Utah State University campus is a dry campus which means alcohol is prohibited on campus and anyone caught in possession of alcohol will be charged and can be terminated from the university, if found guilty. In addition to that, smoking is prohibited inside university buildings and close to 50 feet of them.

SELECTION OF COURSES

It is rational to select the courses right after receiving the Welcome Package as seats for courses are limited and once filled up, they cannot be registered. In addition to that, to be able to recognize the courses taken in the semester abroad by the European University Viadrina, talking with the Department of International Affairs about the registered courses is important. It is also logical to make the Learning Agreement before a student leaves for the study abroad. This will ensure that the effort made by the student during his semester abroad is going to be fruitful. It is to be noticed that courses of other departments can also be registered. However, they may not be recognized by European University Viadrina. A student must take minimum 12 credits to maintain his J1 Visa status and maximum 18 credits in a semester at Utah State University. The procedure of selecting

and registering courses will be written in details in the Welcome Package. Therefore, it is suggested that a prompt action is to be made to select the good courses for the semester at Utah State University.

TRANSPORTATION IN LOGAN

The best part about Logan town is that the public transport is free for all the residents there. There is a public transport called CVTD that take people around the town. Students can take the bus from two stops within the university. All the buses go to the Transit Station, which is the central bus station, and depending on where a passenger is going has to get off and take another bus from there. The same happens when a passenger wants to go to the university. This makes travel easier for anyone. There is another bus service from the university called Aggie Shuttle that takes students around the university.

SOCIALIZING

The university organizes inauguration parties for freshmen. The first three weeks are called Weeks of Welcome and many events take place throughout the campus within these 21 days. Apart from that the university administration organizes several fairs where different organizations, and firms take stalls to advertise themselves and their products. Among such fairs A Day on a Quad,



Pic. 2: An on-campus party organized by USUSA.

Information Fair etc. are significant. The Utah State University Students Association (USUSA) also organizes a few parties within the campus in a semester. These parties take place in the Taggart Student Center hall rooms. The Utah State University International Students Association also organizes different events and parties throughout the semester. These parties are advertised way ahead of the date and so it is recommended to keep an eye for them. Many events from different departments, institutes, and faculties take place frequently throughout the campus. For all the students, going to games, and live performances are free of cost. The

students have to punch their ID cards at the entrance of these events to get entry. Before the American Football games at the Maverick Stadium in the campus known as home games, parties take place outside the stadium with several stalls from different organizations. They include games, free goods, free foods etc. Also, a student organization called The Hurd organizes small games and offers free foods for students in front of the cafeteria, The Junction, before each home game. In addition to all these events, students privately organize parties in their dormitory apartments. Anyone willing to join such parties needs someone who was invited in such a party to join them.

SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

There are two recreation centers at Utah State University, The Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER), and the Aggie Recreation Center (ARC). The HPER holds a few swimming pools, indoor courts of different games such as basketball, handball etc. Students can take different sports classes at HPER for the whole semester for as little as 50 dollars per class. Access to swimming pools are free for all the students. Students can rent different sports equipment from the reception. They can also rent a locker for the whole semester for a fee. The ARC has an active gymnasium, a running track on the first floor, a couple of multipurpose courts, and an indoor rock-climbing wall.

TRIPS TO PARKS AND HIKING TRAILS

It is possible to go on trips to different state parks around Utah on holidays and weekends. The Utah State University organizes many outdoor programs for current students throughout the semester. Many of them are free of cost and a few of them have fees. Any current student can join these trips only by registering in time. In addition to that, students can themselves rent a car/van can go to different parks. To have a place to stay during the night, students can rent rooms from Airbnb or put out tents. It is possible to rent tents from Aggie Recreation Center (ARC) for a fee. It is to be noted that car rentals can only be made from Salt Lake City. Parks such as Bear Lake



Pic. 3: Delicate Arch at the Arches National Park in Moab, Utah.

State Park, Tony Grove Lake are close to Logan. Arches National Park, Yellowstone National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Zion National Park, Capital Reef National Park, and Canyonlands National Park can also be visited but these parks are at a distance from Logan.



Pic. 4: The writer in maroon t-shirt on a hike on Bonneville Shoreline Trail, Logan, UT.

There are several hiking trails only in Logan. Students can easily access them by foot from the university. However, some hiking trails are at a distance from the campus and hence students will need to take a ride to reach the point. It is also possible to do rock-climbing in Utah.

CONCLUSION

Overall, based on expenses made for the semester abroad at Utah State University, it can be said that the university falls in the middle of the list. The problems that students face is that of inter-city transportation. The public transportation system is not up-to-date within cities in Utah. Apart from that, there does not seem to be any other problem. The prospects of going to Utah State University are far more than that of the constraints. Hence, I would recommend students looking forward to study at a university in the USA for a semester to choose Utah State University without any hesitation.

REFERENCE

Spencer, B., 2018. *The Utah Statesman*. [Online]

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